

VIA FACSIMILE (703) 872-9306

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please Replace the paragraph identified with the Replacement Paragraph below:

1. Paragraph beginning at pg. 12, line 12, and ending on pg. 13, line 13:

A second embodiment of the blade changer comprises lower and upper stage bodies 201, 205, respectively. With reference to Figs. 7-8, the microtome blade cartridges are removably located within the upper stage body 205. The lower stage body is adaptable to a wide variety of rotary microtomes, and serves as the common interface mounting for the upper stage. The disposable blade cartridges 210, 215 are adapted to lock into the upper stage body 205 so as to provide an element of safety. The cartridges are described more fully in the first embodiment and in Figs. 3-5. In this second ~~embodiment~~ embodiment they differ only in that the dispensing tab 90 (Figs. 1-2) is replaced by dispensing tab 290 (Fig. 7-8). The cartridges are releasable only when the individual blades are fully secured within the body of the cartridge. This "interlock" function can be attained in many ways, however a preferred embodiment includes an on-board microcontroller which monitors the state of operation of the blade changer. When the controller's logic functions determine that no blade edges are exposed, then the clamping plate and/or the cartridges may be released. The interlock function is more fully described below. The clamping means includes clamping plate 20, support plate 25, and clamp pivot rod 112 which together function to clamp the blade in the cutting position during use of the blade in the microtome. Reverser shuttle 230 has a shuttle tab portion 231 mounted to engage the slot ~~234~~ in dispensing tab 290. Dispensing tab 290 is integral with the supply cartridge 215. Reverser shuttle 230 has a threaded portion (not shown) which engages reverser screw 240. The function of reverser shuttle 230 is to move dispensing tab 290 of the blade supply cartridge 215 thereby urging new blades 95 to the central cutting area. As shown by Figs 3-4, this is performed through downwardly protruding member 92 which engages a slot or hole 96 formed in the body of blade 95 which enables dispensing tab 290 to engage the topmost blade in its stored position at the top of the stack of blades contained within supply cartridge 215. Reverser screw 240 is supported on either end by bearings 241 which are supported and retained by upper stage body 205. Reverser shuttle 230 engages reverser screw 240 ~~through the~~ through helical cutout 232 and mating helical threads (not shown) located on the shuttle 230. In a ~~preferred~~ preferred embodiment, ~~reverser~~ reverser shuttle 230 acts like a threaded nut and moves laterally at the

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urging of reverser screw 230. The helical cutout of reverser screw 230 is unique in that the reverser shuttle will move back and forth without a ~~concomitant~~ concomitant change in direction of any other component in the drive train. Similar reverser screws are common and well-known in the ink-jet printer art.